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Mighty Dollar

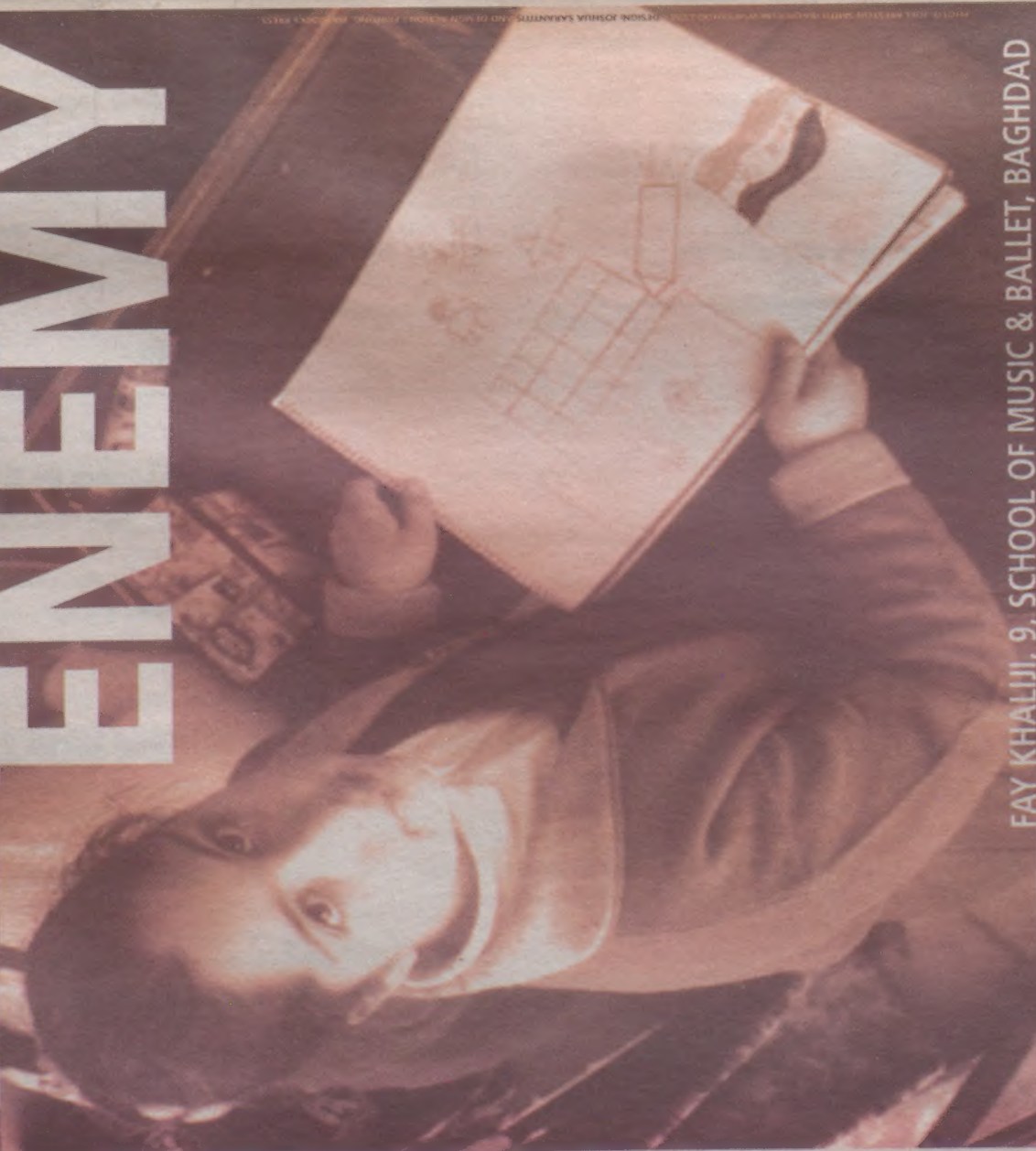
APRIL 2003



OUR VOICE

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

FACES OF THE ENEMY



FAY KHALIJI, 9, SCHOOL OF MUSIC & BALLET, BAGHDAD

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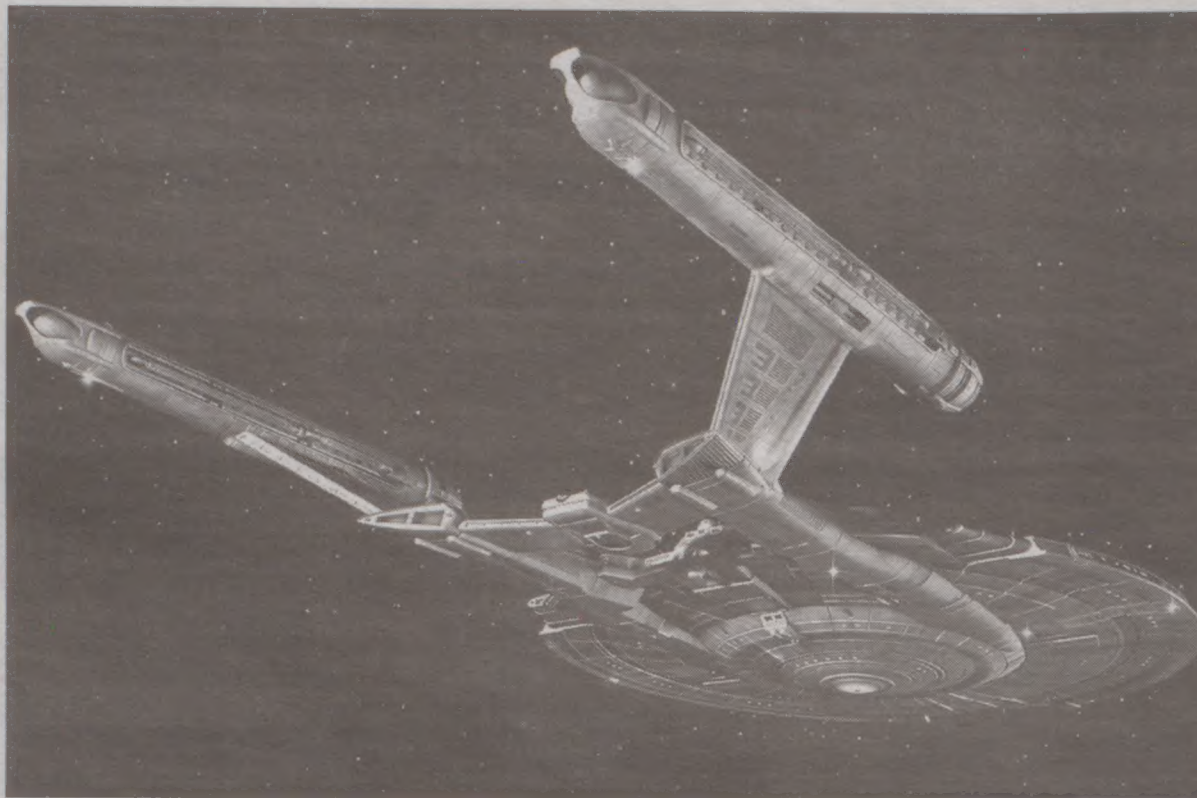
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Imagine that...

Editorial...

I've been wondering about money lately. How it rules our lives, how it's become the benchmark for making political decisions. I've been watching a man with too much power use money to buy support for a war. I've heard Bill Smith and Ralph Klein say that Alberta must support the U.S. because if we don't, we'll lose business—i.e. money. And I'm thinking about how moral decisions are now based on—you guessed it—money. I'm thinking about how I spend too much energy thinking about ways to make money. And I've been wondering if my own use of money is really in line with

my values. And now that I've done all this thinking about money, I have a headache. I don't like our money system and I don't like my heart hurting, so now I'm thinking about how it could be different.

My favourite Star Trek episode (bear with me, non-Trekkies) is the one where a capitalist from our era wakes up in the future Star Trek world. It is a world where all people on Earth have food, clothing, shelter, and education provided. He cannot comprehend that the Star Trek future has no place for the pursuit of money. Captain Picard tries to explain, "The acquisition of wealth is no longer a driving force in our lives—we work for the betterment of ourselves and the rest of

humanity." The poor capitalist is dumbfounded—he just can't imagine such a world.

The Star Trek producers never really explored how this greedless society worked or how they got there. So I invented my own game that I play when stuck in traffic or waiting in line. I call it "Imagine." Imagine a world where everyone's basic needs are met. Food, clothing, shelter, health care, education—all provided free of charge. Imagine that billions of people would no longer have to scramble to survive. The game can take many forms: What would a world with no poverty look like? Would there be any crime (that was yesterday's)? What would I do if I didn't have to work? If people

My favourite Star Trek episode is the one where a capitalist from our era wakes up in the future Star Trek world. It is a world where all people on Earth have food, clothing, shelter, and education provided.

could choose to pursue work they love, what incredible things would emerge?

When I tell other people about my "Imagine" world, their reactions are always revealing. Most of them get a funny look on their faces. And they then proceed to tell me all the ways it can never be. Like the capitalist in Star Trek, they just can't imagine such a world. It is a truly foreign concept. It's the stuff that would give Ralph Klein and gang nightmares. Imagine—giving people the necessities of life. Why you'd never get them to work then! Imagine if none of us had to work. Imagine if we could choose work that makes our souls sing, instead of work that pays the bills.

I'm not the only one thinking about money. This issue has several stories about other people re-thinking and re-inventing money. In fact, one group has found my "Imagine" world is possible within 20 years. Funny thing is, they play a game too. We all need to imagine and to play with this thing called money. It's not so scary when you make it into a game. And it lets us imagine things we might not otherwise be able to. Who knows...maybe we'll boldly go where no one has gone before.

Donna Kerr

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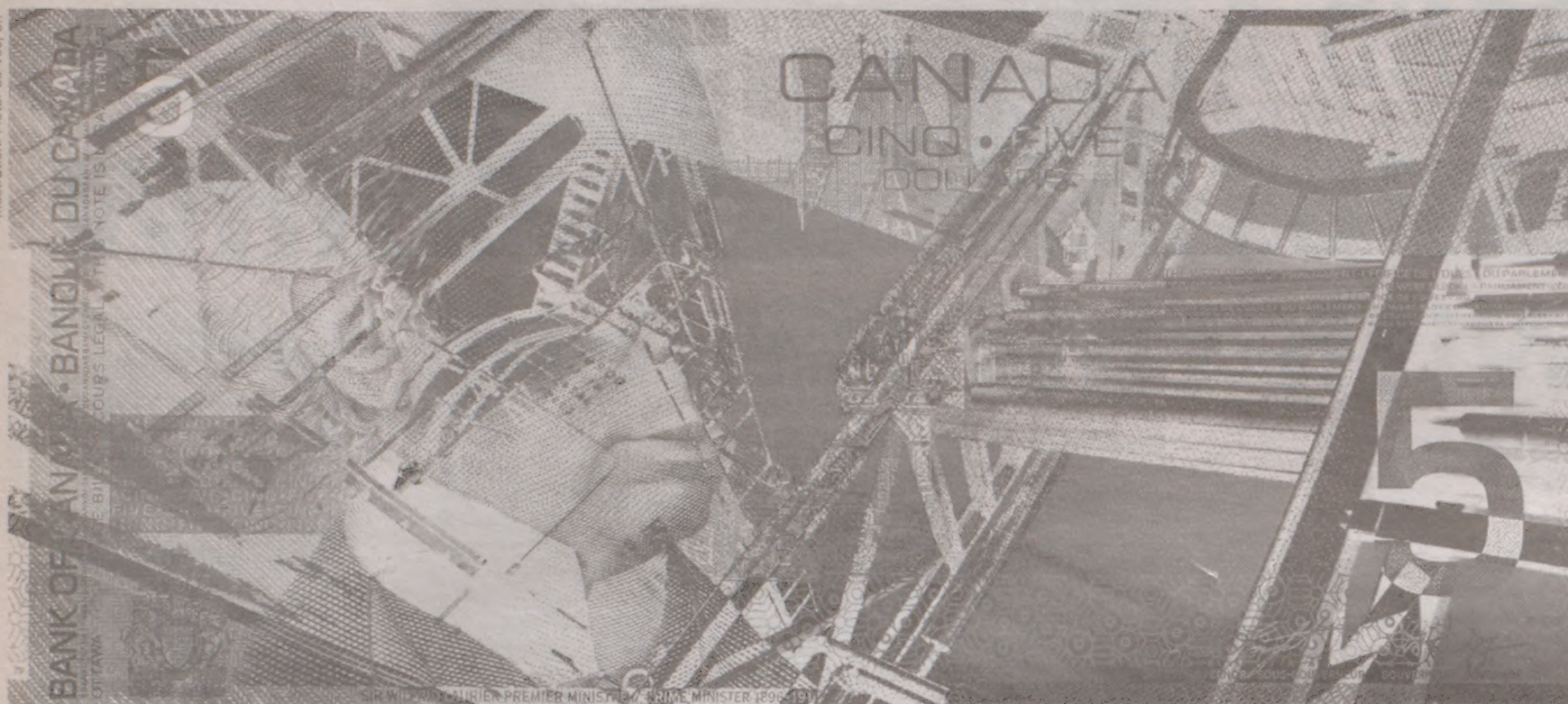
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MONEY **M**

A fool and his **money** are lucky enough to get together in the first place.

GORDON GEKKO (MICHAEL DOUGLAS), WALL STREET (1987).

MONEY

makes the world go round

In the latter years of the 1990s, Barbara Garson put the advance money for her book into the "nicest local bank" she could find, and a mutual fund. Then she followed her money as it winged its way around the world. It helped to build a shrimp farm in Malaysia, an oil refinery in Thailand, a chemical plant in Singapore and was part of the restructuring of the Sunbeam Corporation in the U.S. In her travels she talks to CEOs, Wall Street traders, shrimp fishermen, tradespeople, street vendors—anyone she can find who has come into contact with her money. It's an enlightening journey and was published in 2001 as *Money Makes the World Go Round: One Investor Tracks Her Cash Through the Global Economy, from Brooklyn to Bangkok and Back*.

In the following excerpt from an interview in *The Witness* magazine, she explains the impact her money had on people in Thailand:

My money was building a brand new refinery in Thailand for \$1.9 billion, in the same part of the world as my shrimp farms. It was no coincidence, because it was a time when money was pouring into Southeast Asia.

When I arrived in Thailand, there were 9,500 people camped around my refinery working to build it. I talked to some of them, to the CEO, and I got friendly with a street vendor in front of the refinery, a fabulously interesting woman who I call "Squirrel." She and another woman were saving to set up a permanent stand in a market, which would certainly be a move up for them. They had moved there from the country, and they weren't sad. One of them expressed it very forcefully. For a while she worked in what you and I would call a sweatshop. And she said that sitting in front of a sewing machine, no matter how long, didn't bother her when she thought back to standing in the paddy fields with leeches on her legs.

In that phase everybody seemed to be moving up, and it was very exciting that these two were saving together to buy a market stand. They were like mother and daughter. I could get very sidetracked into the family stories—but it's not a sidetrack, because these are the sorts of opportunities that my money was producing.

So these women vendors are now selling food in front of my refinery to these 9,500 workers. At that point, global capital looked like what all the people who are touting it say it is. Everybody was moving up. I could see at my refinery that the people from the country became welders and welders became foremen and foremen became contractors and contractors became bankers and these two street vendors were going to become entrepreneurs of their little stand. I

called it a little stand, but it was a restaurant to them.

Then suddenly, through something that you will understand if you read my book, called a currency attack, the Thai baht was worth half as much as before, in relation to dollars. Now, if you remember, we talked at the beginning about the fact that the beginning of the global economy came with banks in the U.S. demanding the right to invest abroad. Before the 1970s most countries had something called capital control laws. We did too. One very common law was that a country like Thailand would say to its own banks, you can't borrow more than a certain percent of the money in a foreign currency. The U.S. government was very influential in making other governments end these rules about capital controls, so now all those rules were broken down.

After the currency attack, suddenly their currency is worth half as much, and they have to pay back their loans in dollars. So the people in Thailand who borrowed from my bank in the U.S. really can't pay it back. Just Chase alone had about \$50 billion in danger in Thailand at that point. So although these are private loans to private banks or private companies in Thailand, the U.S. government goes with the banks, and they say to the Thai government, "You are going to assume or assure that debt. You can try to get the banks to pay it back, but whatever can't be paid back, you, the Thai government, are going to guarantee."

Now we're getting back to my street vendors. Thailand is a country that both exports rice and feeds itself very well with rice. It was rice rich. Now, the U.S. banks are saying to the Thai government, "We're not going to lose any money on our loans. You have to come up with dollars to pay us back." How are they going to get the dol-

lars? They get the dollars by exporting something from the country and selling it in dollars.

So one of the things the Thai government does is to manipulate it so that the price of rice doubles. And then more of the rice they produce is exported and they get dollars.

So if my street vendor wants to keep in business—let's say she finds a factory that's still operating and goes and stands in front of it and sells a rice-based dish—she's selling to people who hardly have any money now and she has to absorb more of the cost. She is just plain poorer.

The IMF [International Monetary Fund] was really worried for a while. They were thinking about putting in some traffic lights, some capital controls. But when the crash ended and none of the banks had lost any money, not a penny, they stopped thinking about those traffic lights. The bankers and the U.S. government and the IMF congratulate themselves and they say, "We got through that. We averted a crisis."

They averted a crisis, but of the people that I got back to in Thailand, nobody is working in the same job or living in the same place. The street vendor, Squirrel, had disappeared. One of the oil refinery welders now didn't have as much money and he couldn't take care of his family and the money he earned was now very much useless. But he was studying English because so many of the projects in the area that survived were being bought with American money.

Some people were going home to the country, but there was less country, because my oil refineries and my shrimp farms had taken up a lot of the land.

Excerpt from: Jane Slaughter, "Money makes the world go round, an interview with Barbara Garson." *The Witness*, November 2001.

SEND A LETTER TO THE EDITOR



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With this Bauble

April 20

P PATCHWORK

Oliver Cromwell comes down to the House of Commons in 1653 to dissolve the remainder, the Rump, of the Long Parliament originally elected in 1640, as recounted by S.R. Gardiner in his History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate.

[N.B. For an interesting shift in perspective, substitute the word "congress" for "parliament" and the word "congressional" for "parliamentary".]

He said: "It is time for me to put an end to your sitting in this place, which you have dishonoured by your contempt of all virtue and defiled by your practice of every vice. Ye are a factious crew, and enemies to all good government. Ye are a pack of mercenary wretches and would, like Esau, sell your country for a mess of pottage [a thick soup

of vegetables and often meat]." He pointed to individuals, and called them "whoremasters, drunkards, corrupt and unjust men" adding "Ye have no more religion than my horse. Ye are grown intolerably odious to the whole nation... Perhaps ye think this is not parliamentary language. I confess it is not, neither are you to expect any such from me... It is not fit that ye should sit as a parliament any longer. Ye have sat long enough unless you had done more good." When Peter Wentworth protested at such language from one they had "so highly trusted and obliged," Cromwell retorted: "Come, come, I will put an end to your prating. Ye are no parliament. I say ye are no parliament. I will put an end to your sitting." He shouted to Thomas Harrison, "Call them in," and the musketeers entered. He pointed to the Speaker: "Fetch him down." Harrison hesitated: "The work is very great and dangerous," then obeyed. Sir Henry Vane protested: "This is not honest, yea it is against morality and common honesty."

Cromwell: "O Sir Henry Vane, Sir Henry Vane, the Lord deliver me from Sir Henry Vane." Then, turning to the mace: "What shall we do with this bauble? Here, take it away." Then, to the Members: "I command ye therefore, upon the peril of your lives, to depart immediately out of this place. Go, get ye out! Make haste! Ye venal slaves be gone! Take away that shining bauble and lock up the doors." By 11:40 the House was cleared and locked. Someone put up a poster: "This House is to be Lett; now unfurnished."

April 25

William Pitt the Younger, in the House of Commons, 1804. The threat of a French invasion was at its height; Russia, Prussia and Austria were still at peace with France; and

Napoleon was about to declare himself Emperor of the French.

[N.B. For another interesting shift, substitute the phrase "the citizens of the world" for "the people of England".]

We are come to a new era in the history of nations; we are called to struggle for the destiny, not of this country alone but of the civilised world. We must remember that it is not only for ourselves that we submit to unexampled privations. We have for ourselves the great duty of self-preservation to perform; but the duty of the people of England now is of a nobler and higher order... Amid the wreck and the misery of nations it is our just exultation that we have continued superior to all that ambition or that despotism could effect; and our still higher exultation ought to be that we provide not only for our own safety but hold out a prospect for nations now bending under the iron yoke of tyranny of what the exertions of a free people can effect.

We are all **patchwork**, and so shapeless and diverse in composition that each bit, each moment, plays its own game.

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE



Photos: Pieter de Vos, Jr.

patchworks

music from the inner city

CD release party

Patchworks, the recording project featuring musicians from Edmonton's inner city, will be having a CD release party this month at City Hall. The party will celebrate the completion of the recording phase of the project and the beginning of the marketing of the CD. The project was initiated by Action for Healthy Communities and supported by Bissell Centre and the Winspear Foundation. The

Patchworks recording will be available for purchase through Our Voice, a program of Bissell Centre. The objectives of the project are: to develop positive relationships and enhance latent abilities within the urban core communities, to raise the profile of inner-city musicians and to provide an opportunity for their music to be heard. It will also provide the opportunity for Our Voice vendors to supplement their income.

The CD features 16 songs with a diversity seldom heard on one recording. The playlist begins with a couple of songs from widely respected inner-city guitarist and

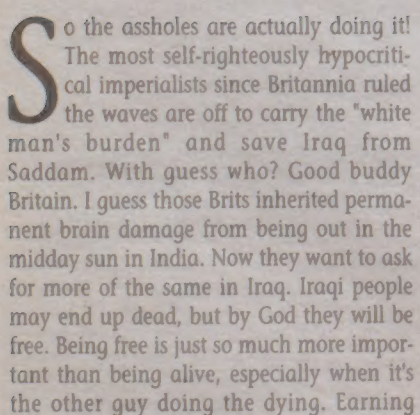
singer/songwriter Doug Carlson, swings through jazz-inflected originals by Grant MacEwan music program alumnus Richard Monkman (who has since moved to Toronto to ply his musical trade), dazzles with a flamenco-flavoured number, then amuses and provokes with a couple of songs imbued with a cautionary message about substance abuse.

The scope of talent featured on this recording is impressive. Also noteworthy are the efforts of Bruce Fox in pulling together the technical and musical ties that bind this project. Fox took the lead in recording the

different musicians and he also played on several of the numbers. All in all, this project is a worthy addition to the community-oriented initiatives supported by Our Voice, Action for Healthy Communities, and the Winspear Foundation. The project was also supported by the West Edmonton Music Society and the Edmonton Mennonite Centre For Newcomers.

Join us for the official release at the City Room in City Hall April 28th at noon and hear some of the songs performed live.

Illustration: Pieter de Vos, Jr.



I was talking to a friend who has just returned from South America. She and her crew were filming rebel music among those people who are returning to the area they once lived in, near where the new Panama Canal is going to be built. The people they were living with were O.K. there for a while, but American spy planes are flying overhead again.. They think they may be chased out again. She told me that she saw farmers protesting in the streets of Mexico

"No Blood for Oil" has a nice ring to it. And how can you possibly go wrong protesting death, destruction and depleted

Theresa McBryan

RAMESH GORDEN

In From the Cold

Photos: Linda Dumont

R REFUGE

Consistency is the last
refuge of the
unimaginative.

OSCAR WILDE



When temperatures dropped to dangerous lows last winter, the Churchill LRT Station was opened by the City as an emergency shelter. Between 50 and 100 people a night came to sleep at the "warming centre" when it opened three times during the months of January, February and March.

Jay Freeman from the City Community Services department said they kept in contact with the shelters, and when people were being turned away during extreme weather, the warming station was opened.

People using the station were served coffee and given blankets to sleep on the floor. The Red Cross donated the blankets, then the City bought some and the Salvation Army donated others. On the last night the station opened as a warming centre, the blankets were given out to the homeless.

The warming centre was necessary even with the 163 beds that were added to Edmonton's homeless spaces this year. The additions include the Hope Mission trailer with 30 mats, churches on the southside with 36 mats, Hope Mission with 45 mats in their chapel and also 10 mat spaces for women sent over when the Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre is filled, and Urban Manor with 12 additional beds.

But there has also been a steady loss of single-occupancy housing. A total of 180 houses were demolished in the McCauley/Norwood/Boyle communities in the last 5 years. A number were rooming houses. Single-family dwellings have replaced many of the older homes that had several rental suites. In addition, the population of Edmonton has experienced rapid growth.

Peter Goldring, MP, said at a townhall meeting on homelessness March 10th that the shelter population is high because of this acute shortage of affordable singles housing. "We have lost 75 per cent of our singles housing over the last 20 years. This is why the shelter need is so high. Edmonton has a shelter population of 600. If even half of them could move into affordable housing at \$300 per month, there would be room in the shelters for those who need it. And how do you get out of a shelter and get a job?"

Barnhart said the pressure on the emergency shelter system should be lessened next winter by the addition of 393 new spaces/housing units already approved through the Edmonton Housing Trust which administers funding from the three levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal).

One of the units that has been approved is a 40,000 foot extension to Hope Mission, located at 9908 - 106 Avenue. Construction of this 4.5 million dollar addition is to begin May 1, 2003.

The addition will have three levels of housing for men. The basement will offer what Bruce Reith, Executive Director of the Hope Mission, referred to as an "In-tox" centre with a capacity to sleep up to 70 men under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Furnished with mats, showers and bathrooms, this area will be open between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. daily and will accommodate the overflow from the George Spady Centre located across the street. These men are currently sheltered in the trailer behind the Herb Jamieson Centre.

The main floor will house offices that surround a large open space. This central area, complete with bathrooms and showers, can accommodate up to 100 mats. It will offer overnight shelter to the overflow from the Herb Jamieson Centre, said Reith. During this past winter, these men were sheltered on mats in the chapel of Hope Mission. The space will also be utilised to hold community dinners as the need arises.

The second floor will consist of a transitional area with 40 private rooms, a common area and shared washrooms. These rooms will be available to men at no cost. Residents will be able to stay from three to six months to allow them to get on their feet.

On the third floor, twenty self-contained units will be available at affordable rates to men on low incomes.

The Hope Mission expansion is expected to be completed in early December 2003. The additional 40,000 square feet will expand the Hope Mission to 56,000 sq ft.

"This will be added space," said Reith. "It's not replacement space. It will provide a safe place for men to spend the night, or longer, if they want to. We are excited about it. We think it will make a dent in trying to solve the homeless situation in Edmonton."

Funding for this multi-million dollar project is through the Edmonton Housing Trust Fund and a grant from the City of Edmonton's Low Income Housing Capital Assistance Program (LIHCAP). So far LIHCAP has contributed \$370,000 to the two upper levels of development and will be considering additional funding for the basement in April 2003.

Linda Dumont and Rosalie Anderson

Reducing Street Prostitution

If a new bill on traffic safety is passed, police will have the authority to seize vehicles involved in prostitution-related offences. Under Bill 206 (the Traffic Safety Amendment Act), when a john is arrested, he will be given the option of attending a rehabilitation program like john school if it is a first offence. If he agrees, his vehicle is released. If he refuses, his vehicle will be seized and stored until he

appears in court. If he is convicted, the vehicle is forfeited. But if the family needs the vehicle or if seizure of the vehicle will result in undue hardship for his family, the vehicle will be released for their use after he has agreed to attend a rehabilitation program. If the john is a repeat offender, he will not be given the option of attending a program.

Bill 206 has passed first reading at the legislature, and will be going through second reading and debate about the middle of April.

Harvey Cenaiko, MLA for Calgary-Buffalo, introduced Bill 206 to the Legislative Assembly. He said, "Inner-city residents have concerns about their children

going out into the front yard and being poked by a needle or picking up a condom. The goal of Bill 206 isn't to eliminate prostitution but to make residential communities safer and to remove drug and sex trade paraphernalia from the streets."

Cenaiko said that street prostitution can single-handedly destroy a community. Bill 206 will provide a tool of enforcement for the police and will deter johns. "The problem is not the prostitutes but the sex trade. 97% of the prostitutes are addicted to a substance, whether drugs or alcohol. They are not part of the trade, but victims of violence. Once you remove the customer, the business will fail."

Bill 206 is based on legislation passed in Manitoba in 1998 where, in the first year, 83% of the vehicles seized were released. Only three were sold. Since the bill was introduced in Winnipeg, street prostitution decreased by 80%, said Cenaiko.

Saskatchewan passed similar legislation last year. Since then, 87 cars have been seized; 80 of them were released, four were released later, and three were forfeited.

Cenaiko said people who are in favour of Bill 206 can send letters of support to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

Linda Dumont



Making the grade

rating our schools

The Fraser Institute report on schools is supposedly a tool to help parents determine how well their children's school is doing in comparison to other schools, but educators say the ratings have little value. One argument is that it is not fair to compare children from different schools where the socio-economic backgrounds differ. The ratings, however, do clearly indicate one

thing—the more educated and affluent the parents, the better chance the children have to achieve high scores on the achievement tests.

In the report, schools are marked with a rating from 0 to 10 based on the students' marks on the Grade Three and Grade Six standardized provincial achievement tests in reading and math. If a school has less than 15 students in

these grades, it is not ranked, so McCauley School, located at 9538-107 Avenue, was not listed in the report.

Other inner-city elementary schools' ratings ranged from near the top to near the bottom of the scale. Victoria School, located at 10210-108 Street, rated second highest overall with 9.2, while Norwood School less than ten blocks from Victoria School rated near the bottom with a score of 1.2.

Shawnda Yeoman, Principal of Victoria School, said, "I really don't think the Fraser Institute report is a fair indicator of successes. It is just one indicator. We are proud of our kids. The ratings indicate the success students experience when the fine arts are integrated into the program."

But can Victoria School be compared with other local community schools? Victoria School is a school of choice. The children must meet certain requirements and there are no provisions to help students who are experiencing difficulties, no resource rooms and no teachers' aides. Students come not only from the surrounding community but are also bussed or driven from all over the city and as far away as Wabamun and Thorsby. The average education for parents of the students at Victoria School is reported to be 14.2 years.

The students in Norwood School come from the surrounding neighbourhood where unemployment and underemployment are a big problem. The average education of parents is reported to be 11.1 years.

Norwood School Principal Heather Raymond said the Fraser Institute report is just one tool, and there are other measures that have to be looked at. "What families can give their children affects what happens in the classroom," said Raymond. "We've put a lot of effort into making a more level playing field."

To do this, Norwood is one of seven schools in the City Centre Educational Project aimed at improving opportunities in the school. Through the project, they have a mentorship program where 120 volunteers help with literacy, a family therapist, and partnerships with community groups such as the YMCA for literacy and physical activities. The school also offers piano and violin lessons. Cool School provides after-school enrichment for the top three to five per cent of the students.

"We see the value and worth of every child who comes here. Each child has potential. We are working to raise that potential," said Raymond.

But children are only in school for a few hours a day. Home is still the biggest influence on a child's life. Jim Hawley, a child mental health therapist, said, "It's a well-established fact that people who are well-fed and well-stimulated experience greater success in school. There is even a correlation between the number of magazines in the home and achievement—the greater the number of magazines, the higher the grade point average. Poverty also impacts a person's outlook in life. Children have a tendency to go to school as long as their parents did and not much beyond."

Another inner-city school, St. Michael

School, located at 10545-107, placed at 5.9—a big increase from their 2000 rating of 1.2 and their 1999 rating of 0. According to the Fraser Institute report, the average education of parents of St. Michael School students is 12.1 years.

When asked about what she thought was responsible for the increase in ratings, Principal Helen Matsuba said she is concerned not with the Fraser Institute report but that all students in the school did as well as could be expected. To achieve this, the Catholic School Board has a project called Assessment for Learning. Students are assessed based on ability tests and the board's exams in math for grades two, four, five and eight. Language exams are being added this year.

The achievement results are analyzed and strategies and goals are set at a provincial level and at a district level. Each school also has a plan and each teacher sets a plan. Matsuba is satisfied that their system is working. "We compared this test with the provincial achievement tests and all of our students did as well as they were expected to as a whole," said Matsuba.

Peter Cowley, author of the report, was quoted in the Edmonton Sun February 22, "It seems to me we produce the report card to help parents make a choice. We've got all sorts of caveats involved—that you also have to talk to the school, that you have to talk to the teachers, and so on."

Cowley said the Fraser Institute plans to continue to produce the report in spite of the flak every year from teachers and teachers' unions because parents are interested in how their children's schools rate.

Linda Dumont

SCHOOL S

A school without grades must have been concocted by someone who was drunk on non-alcoholic wine.

KARL KRAUS

Victoria

Rating this year: 9.2 (2001: 8.9; 2000: 9)

Average marks:

Grade 3 Language Arts	79%
Grade 3 Math	84%

Grade 6 Language Arts	84%
Grade 6 Math	82%

Saint Michael

Rating this year: 5.9 (2000: 1)

Average marks:

Grade 3 Language Arts	61.6%
Grade 3 Math	74.6%

Grade 6 Language Arts	67.9%
Grade 6 Math	76.3%

Norwood

Rating this year: 1.2 (2001: 1.1; 2000: 0.4)

Average marks:

Grade 3 Language Arts	58.8%
Grade 3 Math	55.2%

Grade 6 Language Arts	60.4%
Grade 6 Math	57.2%



D DOLLAR

Any time you take a chance you better be sure the rewards are worth the risk because they can put you away just as fast for a ten **dollar** heist as they can for a million **dollar** job.

Stanley Kubrick



THE MIGHTY DOLLAR

If you don't have any money, make your own

Anyone can create his or her own money. Thousands of towns, cities, and even apartment buildings worldwide have created their own money. It's legal and even taxable (darn!). This form of money, called local currency, is usually restricted to a geographic area and keeps money in the local economy.

Local currency systems vary from place to place since each system has been developed to meet the needs of its community. Imagine—money designed to meet local needs! Local currencies meet many needs: raising the minimum wage, supporting local businesses, allowing people to get paid for skills not valued in the mainstream system, protecting the environment, and encouraging a sense of community.

So how does it work? Here are two examples of local currencies: one is a model for other systems worldwide and the other is a Canadian example.

Ithaca HOURS

If you go to the Ithaca HOURS web site (www.ithacahours.org), you can find out how you can stay at a bed and breakfast, rent a bike, rent a car, eat out at many restaurants, buy food, and pay the entry fee at several attractions all with the local currency called Ithaca HOURS.

"HOURS doubles the minimum wage.

People have paltry amounts of money in their pockets — we have the highest rates of working poor in New York state; they work full-time but earn so little! So what you have is a city full of window shoppers, and if businesses want people to come into their stores and be loyal to them and buy their products, we're saying, "Hey, give these people a break, they have earned this money doing real labour and at a better rate of pay than usual."

Paul Glover, Ithaca HOURS founder

One of the oldest and most successful local currencies, Ithaca HOURS were started in 1991 in Ithaca, New York (population 28,000). They are called HOURS to remind people that the real source of money's value is created by people—our time, skills, and energy. There are five bills in circulation: the HOUR, Two HOURS, and 1/2, 1/4 and 1/8 HOURS.

The core of the system is the HOUR Town directory, a sort of Yellow Pages for the system. It lists thousands of ways to spend HOURS. Over 400 businesses participate in the system, as well as thousands of individuals. Businesses include chiropractors, groceries, restaurants, plumbers, carpenters, health clubs, movie theatres, and even a bank. Individuals are listed too, anything from odd jobs, crafts, babysitting, and driving. Some people get paid with HOURS and some pay their rent with HOURS.

You can get hours by joining the system and listing yourself in the HOURS directory (you get 2 HOURS for joining). Or you can buy HOURS at a selected locations or ask for them for change. You can also accept HOURS as payment at a yard sale, for doing chores, or for any other exchange you arrange. The HOURS system is like a barter system but with currency. Instead of having to scramble to find an exact match of items to barter, you get HOURS which can be spent wherever you choose.

Since 1991, over 8,500 HOURS have been issued and organizers estimate that transactions worth several million dollars have taken place. The organizers now make HOURS grants to community organizations and have begun to do interest-free HOURS loans to individuals or businesses who are members of Ithaca HOURS. These loans can be repaid in HOURS or in dollars.

The organizers have helped hundreds of other communities start their own systems and have developed a package called the Hometown Money Starter Kit. It costs \$40

and includes a video.

Toronto Dollars

The Toronto Dollar began in December, 1998. The model used by the Toronto Dollar is different from most other models of local currencies in that it places 10% of the Toronto Dollar in a Community Projects Fund. For example, you can pay 10 Canadian dollars for 10 Toronto dollars. Nine of the Canadian dollars are placed in a reserve fund to pay businesses when they want to exchange their Toronto Dollars back into Canadian dollars. The remaining one dollar is placed in the Toronto Dollar Community Projects Fund.

The main location for the Toronto Dollar is the downtown St. Lawrence neighbourhood. Organizers are hoping to expand it Toronto-wide. The Toronto Dollar currency is printed in denominations of \$1, \$5, \$10 and \$20. Over 250,000 Toronto Dollars have been exchanged since its inception.

Businesses pay \$25 to register with the program. They get listed in The Toronto

"A drop at a time makes the ocean. A pebble at a time makes the land. A Toronto Dollar at a time builds a better neighbourhood. Collectively, we make a difference."



"When we exchange our Canadian dollars for Toronto Dollars, we know we can spend them in all sorts of places. We can get our carpets cleaned, our furniture moved, our teeth fixed, our eyes examined, we can get glasses, food, clothes, appliances, take singing lessons - a whole variety of goods and services. At the same time, without having to make a donation, we are channelling funds to people among us in need."

Dollar Voice (the directory of where you can spend Toronto Dollars) as well as receive a window sign. Only registered businesses can exchange their Toronto Dollars for 90 cents in Canadian Dollars. So why would a business accept Toronto Dollars when they only receive 90 cents if they cash them in? Well, for one, they don't tend to cash them in and two, business owners are people who need to buy things like the rest of us. And the list of businesses accepting Toronto Dollars has

many things a business owner could use.

Toronto Dollars benefit the community in several ways. The Community Projects Fund provides grants to create work for those who are on low incomes, unemployed or homeless. Over 25,000 Toronto Dollars have been given as grants to community organizations. Toronto Dollars can increase the spending power of participating community and charitable organizations by 10%. These organizations can exchange 100 Canadian dollars for 110 Toronto Dollars. By purchasing supplies and services with Toronto Dollars, they can have more money available for programs. Finally, an agency can give tax-free honorariums in Toronto Dollars to volunteers. These honorariums can be a way to supplement the income of volunteers.

What if money were free?

Interest is the price of money. When you borrow money, you are actually buying it. The price of the money you buy is the interest charged. This concept is so ingrained in our society that we rarely question it. Interest can be a drag on the economy. We know that when interest rates rise, spending goes down. Interest transfers money from the less wealthy and places it in the hands of the wealthy. When you pay interest on a loan, it goes to a bank's profits, which then go to its shareholders. Shareholders are wealthy enough to be able to buy shares in the first place.

In addition, loaning money is one of the ways new money is created. You borrow \$10,000 and there is suddenly \$10,000 more in the economy. This money is backed by the bank's deposits which are less than the money loaned out. So if a large number of people (or a country) can't repay their loans, the whole system is in trouble. Sort of like a house of cards.

A lot of money gets spent on buying money. For example, a \$100,000 mortgage at 5% over 25 years costs the borrower almost \$75,000. That \$75,000 goes to the bank. A loan of \$20,000 over 5 years at

"Every hike in interest rates means that businesses have to pay more to service their loans. To counteract this financial strain they must either cut labour costs, which worsens unemployment; or raise prices, causing inflation; or re-engineer their work to increase output, which leads to increased use of natural resources."

Oscar Kjellberg, JAK Bank

7.5% costs over \$4,000. Again this amount goes to the bank.

But what if money were free? What could we do with the money we don't spend on interest? Well for starters, we could spread it around to share with other people who need loans or mortgages—perhaps people who don't fit the banking system's tidy ratios. And that is what a non-traditional bank is Sweden is doing.

The JAK Bank (the letters are Swedish for land, labour, capital) has 24,000 members with \$50 million on deposit. When you open an account, you become a shareholder. As everyone holds just one share, each shareholder has equal influence in the annual vote for the board of directors. The JAK Bank is an e-bank, conducting its business by mail, phone and the Internet. It pays for administration with service fees. Members pay \$20 to join and pay loan fees.

The total amount of fees totals about 2% of a loan amount. Members receive a magazine about the bank's activities as well as educational workshops.

The JAK bank never lends out more than it has on deposit so it's very stable. To get a loan, you must "pre-save" to create a base for borrowing. Instead of interest, you get Savings Points. These points are calculated with other factors (relating to the amount of cash the bank has) to determine how much you can take out in a loan and for how long. This system requires pre-saving, which helps to ensure people do not borrow more than they can handle (Swedish culture places a much higher value on savings than the North American culture).

To compare a JAK mortgage to a conventional bank mortgage mentioned above, the 0% JAK mortgage of \$100,000 would be paid off in 13 years. Before getting the deed to your house, you must continue to make the same monthly payment for another 12 years (to equal the 25 years it would take to pay off the conventional mortgage). These payments add your money to the pool that other people can borrow from. After the 12 years, you can stop making payments and all the money will be returned to you. So the grand result is—you own your house and you have \$75,000 saved. And you've helped other people get loans. Compare that to the conventional loan where you paid out \$175,000 and get the house (and you have to hope your house increased in value by \$75,000 over the 25 years of the mortgage or you've lost money).

While the pre-savings requirement would rule out many working poor who aren't able to save, this model could be adapted. All that would be required is a large endowment to create the lending pool and then it could be self-sustaining. This model has tremendous potential to allow low-income people to own their own home or get business start-up loans. In addition to the ability to get a loan, it also would leave them at the end of the loan period with a sizeable chunk of savings. What a great way to help lift people out of poverty!

Donna Kerr

Art & Commerce:

M MONEY

Money couldn't buy friends, but you got a better class of enemy.

SPIKE MILLIGAN

Weren't we all taught that Art and Commerce were polar opposites? But art has to do with symbolism—the human tendency to make one thing stand for another—and money is the most deeply symbolic thing there is. Money as such is, as Oscar Wilde said, perfectly useless. You can't eat it, drink it, shelter yourself from the cold with it, wear it, or make love with it unless deeply disturbed. In and of itself, it has no emotions, no mind, and no conscience. It doesn't put out flowers or have children, and it makes a lousy pet. It has meaning only when it circulates, and is exchanged for other things; and money doesn't do that for itself. People do that, using money as a symbolic token.

We have all been brainwashed into believing that there is only one kind of money—one kind of wealth—and only one measure of human worth—how much money you have—and one kind of exchange—traditional buying and selling. And only one motive to do so—the Siamese twins of consumer greed and the profit motive. We've also been told all of this is controlled by a mysterious god called Global Market Forces, who is now beyond our control, but to whom we are forced to sacrifice our children. Thus if international commercial interests suck up our wealth, stomp out our magazines, trash our culture, and dictate what toxic chemicals we must eat and drink and breathe, it is the will of Global Market Forces, whose ways are dark, but who is thought to have our best interests at heart in the end."

Margaret Atwood

Money is like sex. Some people believe that the more sexual experiences they have, with as many different people as possible, the more fulfilled they will be. But even great quantities of money and sex may not satisfy the craving. The problem lies not in having too much or too little, but in taking money literally, as a fetish rather than as a medium. If wealth is found by rejecting the experience of poverty, then it will never be complete. The soul is nurtured by want as much as by plenty.

Thomas Moore
Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating
Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life
HarperCollins (1992).

Money is the worst currency that ever grew among mankind. This sacks cities, this drives men from their homes, this teaches and corrupts the worthiest minds to turn base deeds.

Sophocles

Money talks because money is a metaphor, a transfer, and a bridge. Like words and language, money is a storehouse of communally achieved work, skill, and experience. Money, however, is also a specialist technology like writing; and as writing intensifies the visual aspect of speech and order, and as the clock visually separates time from space, so money separates work from the other social functions. Even today money is a language for translating the work of the farmer into the work of the barber, doctor, engineer, or plumber. As a vast social metaphor, bridge, or translator, money—like writing—speeds up exchange and tightens the bonds of interdependence in any community. It gives great spatial expansion and control to political organizations, just as writing does, or the calendar.

Marshall McLuhan
Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,
McGraw-Hill (1964).

Money indeed may be considered as the most universal and expressive of all languages. For gold and silver coins are no more money when not in the actual process of being voluntarily used in purchase, than words not so in use are language. Pounds, shillings, and pence are recognized covenanted tokens, the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual purchasing power, but till in actual use they are only potential money, as the symbols of language, whatever they may be, are only potential language till they are passing between two minds. It is the power and will to apply the symbols that alone gives life to money, and as long as they are in abeyance, the money is in abeyance also; the coins may be safe in one's pocket, but they are as dead as a log till they begin to burn in it, and so are our words till they begin to burn within us.

Samuel Butler
Thought and Language,
Essays on Life, Art and Science (1908).

Money is the last enemy that shall never be subdued. While there is flesh there is money—or the want of money, but money is always on the brain so long as there is a brain in reasonable order.

Samuel Butler
Samuel Butler's Notebooks Company
(1951).

I hesitate to deposit money in a bank. I am afraid I shall never dare to take it out again. When you go to confession and entrust your sins to the safe-keeping of the priest, do you ever come back for them?

Jean Baudrillard

Johnny Clay: You like money. You got a great big dollar sign there where most women have a heart. So play it smart. Stay in character and you'll have money. Plenty of it. George'll have it and he'll blow it on you. Probably buy himself a five-cent cigar.

Sherry Peatty: You don't know me very well, Johnny. I wouldn't think of letting George throw his money away on cigars.

Stanley Kubrick and Jim Thompson
The Killing (1956)

The universal regard for money is the one hopeful fact in our civilisation. Money is the most important thing in the world. It represents health, strength, honour, generosity and beauty.... Not the least of its virtues is that it destroys base people as certainly as it fortifies and dignifies noble people.

George Bernard Shaw

MAMA: Son—how come you talk so much 'bout money?

WALTER: Because it is life, Mama!

MAMA: Oh—So now it's life. Money is life. Once upon a time freedom used to be life—now it's money. I guess the world really do change ...

WALTER: No—it was always money, Mama. We just didn't know about it.

MAMA: No ... something has changed. You something new, boy. In my time we was worried about not being lynched and getting to the North if we could and how to stay alive and still have a pinch of dignity too.... Now here come you and Beneatha—talking 'bout things we ain't never even thought about hardly, me and your daddy. You ain't satisfied or proud of nothing we done. I mean that you had a home; that we kept you out of trouble till you was grown; that you don't have to ride to work on the back of nobody's streetcar—You my children—but how different we done become.

Lorraine Hansberry
A Raisin in the Sun, act 1, scene 2 (1959)

Being accused of making money by selling sex in Hollywood, home of the casting couch and the gratuitous nude scene, is so rich with irony that it's a better subject for a comic novel than a column.... On one coast the cops are busting sex workers on Eighth Avenue, dragging them downtown to night court where they pay the fine and go right back to their corner; on another they're charging Heidi Fleiss with pandering in a town in which the verb is an art form.

Anna Quindlen

We Can Afford It



1. The Wish List

2. Total Arms Spending

A small piece of the pie

"The International Famine Relief Agency could be funded with just 32% of what the U.S. spends on candy each year."

How many times have you heard, "We can't afford to ____" (fill in the blank with anything you choose-feed the poor, provide homes for the homeless, ensure every person gets an education, clean up the environment, etc.)? It seems to be the stock answer to anything the powers that be don't want to do. But is it true? Not according to the World Game Institute.

More than 200,000 people around the world (from government leaders and corporate executives to university, high school and

The Wish List:

Eliminate starvation/malnutrition	\$19 billion
Provide shelter	\$21 billion
Remove landmines	\$4 billion
Eliminate nuclear weapons	\$7 billion
Refugee relief	\$5 billion
Eliminate illiteracy	\$5 billion
Provide clean, safe water	\$10 billion
Provide health care/AIDS control	\$21 billion
Stop deforestation	\$7 billion
Prevent global warming	\$8 billion
Stabilize population	\$11 billion
Prevent acid rain	\$8 billion
Energy efficiency	\$33 billion
Renewable energy	\$17 billion
Stop ozone depletion	\$5 billion
Prevent soil erosion	\$24 billion
Retire developing nations' debt	\$30 billion

TOTAL: \$235 billion

More info: www.worldgame.org

even elementary school students) were asked, "Given the present situation of the world, what do you want the world to be like twenty years from now? What is your preferred state?" Funny thing is, they all answered the

same way. It can be argued that the results give a good indication of where the entire world, given the "vote," would agree to move towards.

The World Game developers have compiled one of the largest databases on expenditures, costs, and solutions to the world's problems. When applied to the world that people want, an amazing thing becomes clear. This collective vision is not only achievable with present day technology and resources, it is affordable. We can afford an ideal world. And we can afford it now. It's all a matter of priorities.

So what is it that people wanted? The Wish List is what people want the world to be like, and what it would cost. We can eliminate all the items on the list by spending a third less on "weapons of mass destruction" each year for 20 years. The attack on Iraq could finance the first year.

Donna Kerr

The World Game Institute was founded in 1972 by Howard Brown and Medard Gabel in collaboration with renowned philosopher and designer, R. Buckminster Fuller. Fuller foresaw the need for a great World Peace Game as an alternative to War Games, and saw the goal of the World Game as making "the world work for 100% of humanity, in the shortest possible time, through spontaneous cooperation, and without ecological offense or the disadvantage of anyone."

MONEY **M**

Beggars beg to get **money**, not to reproach the passerby.

MASON COOLEY

Performers Wanted!

Family Entertainment Night
(Coffee House)

Open Stage! Live Music!
Light Supper! Poetry Reading!

DOOR PRIZES!!

Tuesday, April 15th

Supper 6 PM
Music at 7 PM

Bissell Centre

10527 - 96 St.
Contact: Earl @ 423-2285 ext. 144

DON'T BUY IT.

WAR IS NOT THE ANSWER



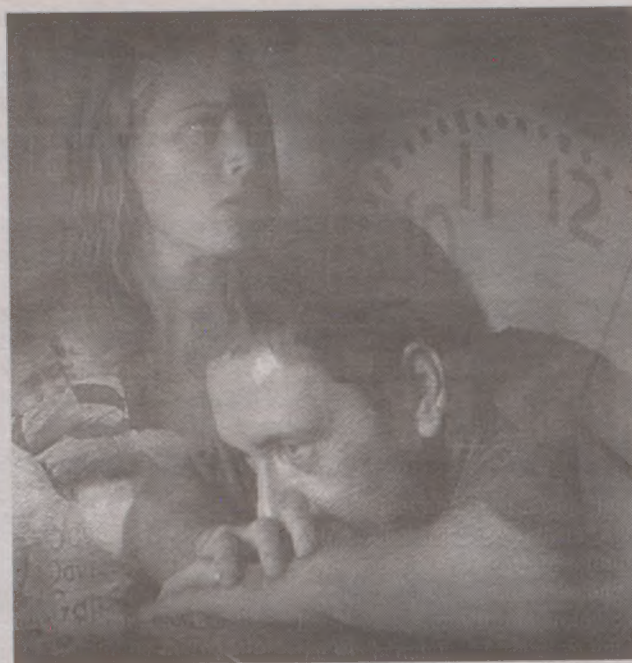
GUERNICA

W WAR

it loves to seek its
is in the young.



Detail from Picasso's *Guernica*, 1937. The painting was a response to the bombing of a Basque town during the Spanish Civil War.



FILM **F**

The good, the mad & the empty

Spider

There is no doubt producer/director David Cronenberg has created a masterful piece of cinema with *Spider*. It may be Cronenberg's most accessible movie to date, but ironically, average movie goers might be frustrated by the psychological thriller's sparse, dreary feel and drawn out pacing. Anyone expecting the gut-churning special effects of "Naked Lunch" or the twisted sexuality of "Crash" may be disappointed. *Spider* is all gritty realism. It tells the tale of Spider, an ambiguous man played by Ralph Fiennes (The English Patient), as he tries to make sense of his past and come to terms with his childhood relationship with his parents.

From the opening credits—showing flashes of artistically peeling paint resembling

ink blots used in psychiatry—to the first introduction to *Spider*, this movie is all about subtle attention to detail. It's a brooding look at the stark realities of mental illness and Cronenberg's unflinching portrayal of Spider's neurotic behaviour is right on the mark. Layered under four button-up shirts with dark, nicotine-stained fingers clawing at a sock he uses as a wallet, you know this character has problems without ever being told as much. As the story plays out, you realize he is in a half-way house after spending most of his life in a mental asylum. Here he must deal with inquisitive and talkative tenants and Mrs. Wilkinson, the iron-fisted authority figure with the power to lock any of them back up if they step out of line.

Patrick MacGrath adapted the screenplay from his novel of the same name. The story seems to unravel in front of you rather than move toward any sort of conclusion. But the sparse and unconventional story

telling allows the actors ample room to shine. Fiennes mumbles almost incomprehensibly throughout his brilliant portrayal, therefore he must rely on his impressive physical acting skills to bring his character to life. Locked away alone in his squalid room, Spider scribbles nonsense into a secret diary as he flashes back to his childhood. Gabriel Byrne (*The Usual Suspects*) puts in a powerful performance as Bill Cleg, Spider's hard working, hard drinking father. The young Spider has a seemingly normal relationship with his doting mother (Miranda Richardson) and father, but his inability to deal with the reality of his parents' sexuality and strained relationship slowly leads them all to tragedy. The true nature of this tragedy and the part the young boy plays in it is the central driving theme.

The plot works out at a tedious pace but what eventually comes are thick and meaty slices of life. Unlike the usual vapid Hollywood fare of chase scenes and explo-

sions leaving you unsatisfied after the initial pleasure, the twists and turns of *Spider* stick to your ribs and give you something to digest for hours after leaving the theatre. Somehow Cronenberg manages to make Spider's illness the central character as it seems to take on a life of its own. The dark corners of his mind hide secrets he is unaware of and in the end there are no easy answers as to what went wrong. There are no last minute flashes of insights and no magic cures. As is so often the truth in real life, Spider's past, present and presumably his future are so intertwined with his madness, he wouldn't exist without it. You won't walk away from this movie feeling light and happy, but it will make you appreciate your grasp on reality a little bit more and should give you some empathy for the difficult lives of the mentally ill.

Phil Duperon

Film is more than the twentieth-century art. It's another part of the twentieth-century mind. It's the world seen from inside. We've come to a certain point in the history of film. If a thing can be filmed, the film is implied in the thing itself. This is where we are. The twentieth century is on film.... You have to ask yourself if there's anything about us more important than the fact that we're constantly on film, constantly watching ourselves.

DON DELILLO

The Life of David Gale

It's Lent and I'm crabby pants. What luck that I would see *The Life of David Gale*, a movie I didn't care for on so many levels and then get to disdain it in print. Particularly disappointing is that Alan Parker directed it; *Mississippi Burning* is a masterpiece and he's always displayed excellent schmaltz radar. This trailers were riveting so when actually watching the movie, it felt as if the guest of honor had RSVPed "yes" to the party, then didn't show; I kept looking expectantly over my wine glass at the door. When will I learn that the steam in Hollywood's engine is empty promises, surface light and appealing to what's most mediocre in us—it just can't deliver?

David Gale (Kevin Spacey) is a passionate, allegedly brilliant philosophy professor. We get to watch him in action, mesmerizing a class of dutifully gaping students with a lecture that sounds as if Schiller took shots at writing fortune cookies. He waxes about, with that enjoyable Spacey élan of slightly fey, sardonic fervor, expounding on aspirations, ideals, dreams and inevitable cream-pie-in-the-face hurled by reality. But when the whirlwind's over, the floor's covered with disjointed puddles of pith. Professor Gale's a publicly zealous death penalty abolitionist and fellow crusader Constance Harraway (the excellent Laura Linney), advises, chastises and unshakably loves him. She admonishes that his ego's brash outbursts taint the public's regard of him, damaging the message. As a leader of men, he is flawed, weak, he sings a hurtin' song. He's stumped on air when a greasy, pro-death penalty Senator challenges him to name one, just one, person killed by the state who was later proven innocent. This matters; it's a debilitating punch to Gale's argument. On to the pandering plot point of his being seduced by a sexy student (it's Hollywood, there has to be an erotic wedgy or two), he's

then charged with rape (later dropped) and loses his job. His beautiful wife leaves him, looking as distressed as her Botox will allow, and she takes their treacly cherub of a son with her. Her suspected affair has been confirmed and she's moving to Spain, which helps her discourage access...a lot. Now he's really unraveling, is doing the front crawl in a river of whiskey. Spacey's awfully good at this, the sorrow on his face ripples and refracts, a mosaic of dying hope; his anguish is palpable, he's a man who has lost his core. Then, irony or ironies, he's accused of murder and is on death row.

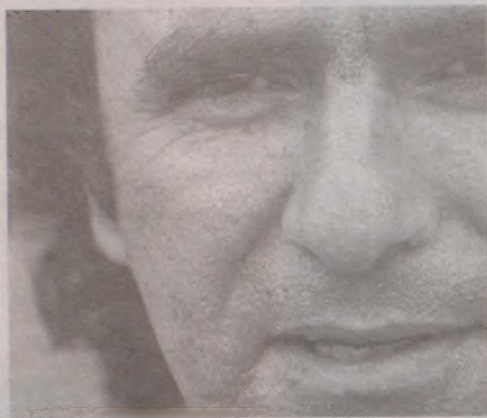
Bitsey Bloom (Kate Winslet) is a journalist of rising fame and David Gale, in his infamous irony, says he will be interviewed only by her. She arrives in Texas with her partner Zack Stemmons (Gabriel Mann). Zack's observed, near the beginning of the movie, reading one of Gale's ponderous books and seems able for it—a sidekick of substance. He then battles wits with Bitsey in an eye-rolling slick exchange, is pulverized and goes forward as if one of his lung's collapsed, settling into a brow-furrowed, hapless weenie. C'mon Zack, goatees aren't a right, they're a privilege and have to be

earned. Perhaps the disparity is to ensure Bitsey doesn't look itsey. Kate Winslet wields her timeless beauty, as always, with intelligent hauteur and ruling class reserve. I always find her incongruous in Hollywood productions; she's a first-rate actress but a fish out of water here because the water's too shallow. She negotiates the ridiculous dramatic crescendo as best she can but it's like Cezanne having only wax crayons to work with.

Even though I don't recommend this movie unless it's cheap theatres/rental, I must be reticent about the plot's twists and misses—it's a mystery after all. Personally, I found this movie squirm-in-your-seat insipid, from the supposedly towering intellects of the university faculty to the "gimme-a-break" plot twists to the feast and famine of the script's cleverness. What can be said about Hollywood trying to make a statement about a serious topic? Put 'em on death row, exterminate the brutes! Happy Easter.

Keyna Laurence

PEOPLE'S COLUMNIST



2 Years & Going Strong

I'm happy to say that as of March 1st 2003, I recently celebrated my second anniversary as the *People's Columnist*. My advocacy column usually features a broad range of informative social issues that impact our inner city and local community.

I'm John Zapantis, and in the last two years, I've written a total of 26 issues of the *People's Columnist* featuring an array of advocacy stories. From the many caring social agencies that help the economi-

cally marginalized integrate back into society, to those less fortunate who've experienced endless setbacks while picking themselves up.

This year, once again, there were simply too many interesting people to mention in my second year anniversary column.

In the *Our Voice* June 2002 issue of *The People's Columnist*, I interviewed a former Bissell Centre operator named Pat (Galarneau) Trithart, who once was involved in a truck accident while driving through the interior of British Columbia with her husband Ron. This remarkable lady has bounced back from that near death tragedy that's left her sightless in her right eye and occasional dizziness. She now uses a cane to walk whenever her dizziness returns.

In the *Our Voice* November 2002 issue of *The People's Columnist*, I had the great honour of covering the 19th Annual Edmonton Motorcycle Toy Run for 630 CHED Santa's Anonymous, held on September 29 2002 at Capilano Mall in Edmonton.

The toy run was originally established in 1984 by Jan Steenson and her husband Pete. Twenty two hundred bikers from various biker clubs showed up for the toy run while collecting toy donations for children whose families could not normally afford the luxuries of a toy at Christmas. The toy run is not only a compassionate effort in raising toys for a good cause, but it also helps eradicate the stereotype that all bikers are outlaws. The ride shows that bikers are people with a lot of heart.

In the December 2002 issue of *The People's*

You've allowed the column that I've been so blessed by God to have written live by its name—and that name is none other than...

The People's Columnist!

Columnist, I had the wonderful experience of writing about an inner-city artist named Sharon Hazen, who I had encountered at a Vietnamese market located in the heart of the inner city.

It was there I heard Sharon describing to the owners of the store (while showing them a painting on canvas) how she had painted it. She had decided one day to photograph the exterior of the store and later painted the store from the photo. Her painting

was an accurate depiction of the store's exterior.

While Sharon was showing the owners her work of art, suddenly a crowd of around 10 southeast Asian customers surrounded this wonderful and enthusiastic artist. The smiles could be seen stretching across the many faces of these people as they all acknowledged their unanimous approval of Sharon's art in their own language.

Once again, it just goes to show how Sharon's true compassion for connecting two very distinct cultures through her art is truly a testament of the human spirit that can quite often be discovered in the inner city.

I'd like to thank: Design and Production Man Pieter de Vos, Jr. for being a younger "Big Brother"—your towering presence matches your heart; Distribution Manager Ron MacLellan for acting more like a boxing coach in a ring, than a distribution manager, while going the distance in giving me the advice when the chips were down; *Our Voice* Supervisor Marilyn Flegler for donating a new computer to me that's helped my column shine; and *Our Voice* editors, keep up the great editing.

Finally, to all my loyal readers who read my column and to all of those interesting people I've had the opportunity of interviewing in the last two years: You've allowed the column that I've been so blessed by God to have written live by its name—and that name is none other than... *The People's Columnist!*

John Zapantis

Photo: Russell Timmerman



The Placements

Paula was a student at Archbishop O'Leary High School, graduated in 2001. She volunteered at General Hospital, participating in the Sunday tea program, and at Alberta Hospital in the arts and crafts program. Paula worked in a group home with adults that were mentally and physically disabled. She has been interested in social work since junior high. Her passion for social work was further solidified when her mother was diagnosed with a mental illness.

Paula started her first year of the Grant MacEwan social work program in September 2002. When time for placement came up, she chose among many inner-city agencies because she wasn't knowledgeable about the people living there. She arrived at Bissell Centre at the end of September because of the diversified programs they had to offer.

Paula is here every Tuesday and Thursday. The main area she works in is Employment Services, but she has got her feet wet by sitting in on the different services that Bissell provides. She has gained insight into the inner-city population and most importantly has shed her stereotypes of the people who live in the inner city.

Her goal is to transfer to the University of Calgary to get her degree in social work when

she finishes the 2-year program at Grant MacEwan.

At this time, she'd like to thank the wonderful group of people at Bissell Centre, with a special thank you to Gaston, Damon and Sandra for their exceptional guidance.

Jennifer (Jen) attended John Paul II High School in Fort Saskatchewan and graduated in 2000. Jen joined the workforce as a receptionist for two years before deciding to enroll at Grant MacEwan College in social work.

It was always apparent that Jen wanted to work in the human services field. Weighing her options, she saw a great opportunity in social work. She volunteered at the Boys & Girls Club for one year. Her main focus was working with nine-to-eleven-year-olds in the home alone safety program. During high school, Jen worked part-time as a dietary aide in an old-age home. When it came time for Jen to choose her placement, she was focused on the inner city. She felt that if she was going to be a good social worker, she needed to understand the different hardships that individuals face in their communities. She felt that she would not be able to be truly sensitive to issues surrounding the inner city unless she educated herself on them.

Jen is here every Tuesday and Thursday. Her main focus is working with the counselors in Hep C. She also spent time in the other programs at Bissell Centre. Her goal is to get her degree in social work at the University of Calgary when she finishes the program at Grant MacEwan.

After completion of her degree, Jen hopes to work with children as she is drawn to their innocence and caring nature. Jen also has a strong interest in addiction as she sees a lot of room for growth in that field.

I would like to thank the staff and clients at Bissell for giving me a chance to see a part of their world. Over the years, there have been quite a few of the student placements that, when finished their schooling, have worked or are still working at Bissell Centre. Best of luck on future endeavors.

Kevin Fox



A delightful taste of the Orient at the Hong Kong Bakery and Restaurant

Photo: John Zapantis

My Big Fat Greek Appetite

If your wife kicks you out of the house after a bad argument and she simply refuses to cook your supper, you may be assured of one thing. Under these circumstances try walking into the Hong Kong Bakery and Restaurant, located at 10649 - 97th Street.

The variety of Chinese food items on display is your supper for the evening and prepared for you at a reasonable price.

Try pork mushroom sticky rice at \$1.35 or bean port sausage with egg yolk sticky rice for \$2.50. Then add in curry beef pastry for .80. These food items are the equivalent supper that any homeless person would love to sample. Consider this delightful treat the easy equivalent to either a breakfast,

lunch or supper offered at a men's or women's hostel.

I enjoyed eating the pork mushroom sticky wrapped in a giant light green leaf. I also enjoyed its cousin, the bean pork sausage with egg yolk sticky rice, wrapped in a dark green leaf. The curry beef pastry was absolutely awesome. Its winning ingredients include curry, beef, green peas, and bits of chopped celery.

I enjoyed a sweet cookie that stole my western heart—the Chinese almond cookie. You may purchase these cookies for \$2.75 a dozen.

On the Big Fat Greek Appetite rating scale, I'll give the Hong Kong Bakery and Restaurant 5 out of 5 Chinese fortune cookies. The wonderful bakery and restaurant food items are edible for taste and prices are low. This eating establishment is an assured deal that I wouldn't trade for all the rice in China!

John Zapantis

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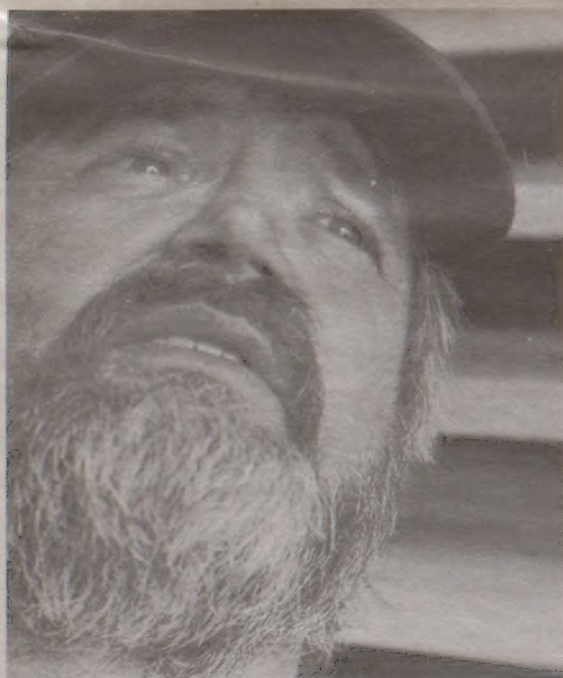
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VOM

VENDOR OF THE MONTH



"I found out that
you had to apply
yourself if you
wanted to get
anyplace..."

George Haraida

Veteran Our Voice vendor George Haraida is not to be underestimated when it comes to his small size. As the old saying goes, "Never judge a book by its cover." Our vendor certainly lives up to that saying when it comes to answering someone's problem. His courage is bigger than his size and he has certainly proven that with work colleagues and clients of Our Voice Magazine.

George first started vending the magazine in 1997. A vendor friend of his named Cecil Garfin referred him to Our Voice Magazine. His vend friend took George under his wing for a year while showing him ways to vend the paper—from learning how to present the paper to answering to the needs of customers.

One year later, George signed up and become an Our Voice vendor. Our outspoken and well-educated vendor has a list of learning achievements that includes a high school diploma and business administration from N.A.I.T.

Prior to joining Our Voice, George Haraida became homeless for 2 years. The increase in his rent forced him to give up his place. During that same time, he was diagnosed with sugar diabetes. Now with poor health and no place of his own, he lived off the streets while turning to various social agencies for food and overnight accommodation.

George has some valid tips on what vendors should be doing to make the paper sell more effectively. He says, "Generally, make sure that the vendors are living up to the standards of the

paper and that they're presenting the paper in a proper way."

While George was gaining his hard earned recognition as a reputable vendor, he learned how to adapt independently. He says, "I found out that you had to apply yourself if you wanted to get anyplace and you can't just rely upon your fellow vendors to support you. You have to look to your own place."

George vends to supplement his income. He also vends for other reasons, like clothing and food.

George is also flexible and always knows how to behave in public, especially around the odd ignorant passerby. He says, "Just keep your cool and your perspective. Have a smile and don't start an argument or make contact with them. Just play it cool and don't say much."

George would like to see more articles in Our Voice reflective of people who live in the inner city. He says, "One prospect of the paper I'd like to see is more community-oriented stories coming out of the Bissell Centre. It should have something within that community. A little more in the paper to let people be aware of what it's about. Plus you'll see that people in that area will be purchasing more of it."

You may find our man of vision vending while looking out for everyone's interest on the corner of 102nd Avenue and 102nd Street, or at Strathcona Farmer's Market in Edmonton.

John Zapantis



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